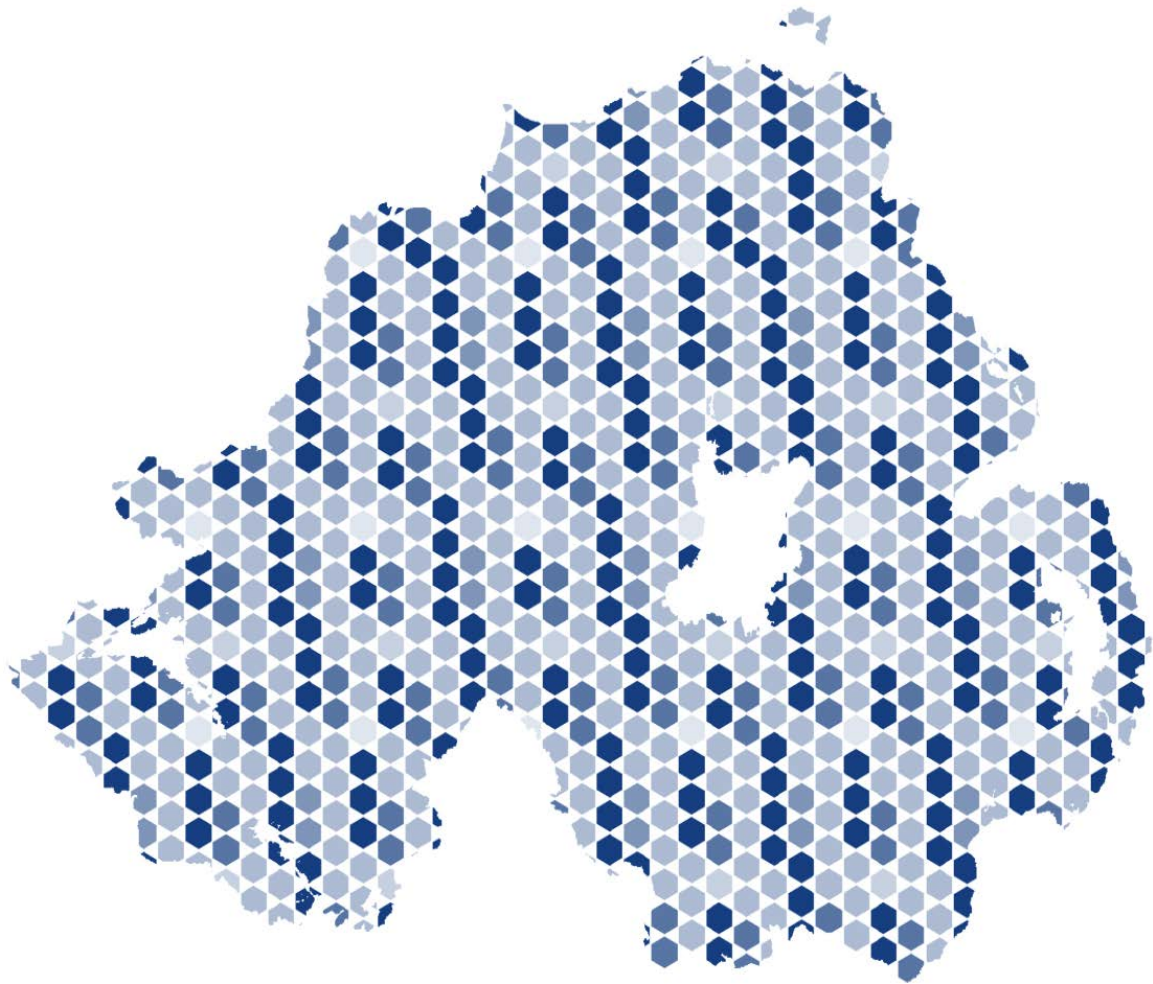


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Magherafelt High School,
County Londonderry

Controlled, 11-18, co-educational school

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
February 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Magherafelt High School draws its pupils from the town and wider area. Over the past three years, enrolment in the school has remained steady at just over 540 pupils. Over the same period, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased, as has the percentage of pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning.

The school is an active member of, and contributor to, the work of the Magherafelt Learning Partnership. As a result, the pupils can access a wide range of post-16 courses in the other schools and there are joint approaches to aspects of professional learning for staff and policy development. The school has a long-standing Shared Education partnership with a local maintained school; pupils have benefited from the work to support transition from primary to post-primary school; raise the outcomes in mathematics and develop the pupils' understanding of aspects of history.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that only the principal would be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

Magherafelt High School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Year 8 Intake	105	77	93	97
Enrolment	580	544	546	542
% Attendance (NI Average)	90.7% (92%)	91.7% (93.5%)	91.4% (n/a)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage ¹	159 27%	163 30%	177 32%	178 33%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	16.2% (94)	19.8% (108)	21.2% (116)	23.6% (128)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	31	38	39	43
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the Learning Support Centre (if appropriate)	17	20	16	16
No. of newcomers	10	8	9	7

Source: data as held by the school.
N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

A very small number of parents (12) and staff (3) responded to the online questionnaires; the majority of the responses were positive about the life and work of the school. The matters raised within the written comments were discussed with the principal and representatives of the governors.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of a post-primary inspection is to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, there was a supplementary subject focus on science in this inspection.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the provision and the overall outcomes for the pupils;
- the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards;
- the quality of the provision in English, mathematics and science; and
- the quality of the provision for the care, welfare and support of the pupils.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they have been reported below.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of Provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- Over the past three years, the outcomes for pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C have risen from significantly below to being in line with, the corresponding Northern Ireland (NI) average.
- The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, have risen from significantly below to being above, the corresponding Northern Ireland (NI) average.
- Over the past three years, at GCSE or equivalent, a majority of subjects are performing in line with, or above, the corresponding NI average, with one-third performing below.

- At GCSE level, girls are significantly outperforming boys. While the school has recognised this as an area for improvement, boys' underperformance at this level needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- The percentage of pupils entered for three or more GCE A Levels or equivalent has decreased over the last three years from 89% to 74%. Over the same period, the percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A Levels or equivalent at grades A*-C, while on a downward trend, remains consistently above the corresponding average for non-selective schools. One-half of subject outcomes at this level are in line with, or above, the respective averages; however, the uptake in these subjects is low.
- At the end of key stage 4, the staying on rate from year 12 to 13 is well below the NI average with under 40% of the pupils progressing to year 13 in the school. Most of those who do leave, however, progress to suitable further education provision. In 2017, more than half the pupils in year 14 progressed to higher education, which is above the average; around one-third entered appropriate further education courses.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the standards attained by the pupils in English, mathematics and science;
- the progression made by the pupils in their learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- The curriculum is broad and balanced across the key stages and provides an appropriate range of general and applied subjects which are matched well to the pupils' wide range of abilities. At post-16, through the Magherafelt Learning Partnership, the school collaborates effectively to broaden the range of subjects on offer to the pupils, although, in the majority of the subjects, there are small numbers enrolled. Review of the curriculum is ongoing to ensure it continues to meet the needs of all the pupils.
- A taught programme of employability is delivered at key stage (KS) 3 and a careers programme at KS 4 and post-16; these are complemented by workshops and information provided by a wide range of external organisations. Work-experience placement opportunities are available to year 11 and 13 pupils. In discussions with inspectors, the pupils spoke positively about the support and advice they receive from the staff; they identified the need for further advice and guidance to inform better the subject choices they make in year 10.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the impact of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;

- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning;
- the quality or overall impact of the careers education, information, advice and guidance provision;
- the quality of provision in English, mathematics and science across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- The school development plan, which is well-informed by the effective analysis of performance data, guides the work of the school and identifies appropriate areas for development. There is evidence of improvement in relation to some of the key priorities: for example, improving the pupils' GCSE outcomes and broadening the curriculum to meet better the needs, interests and aspirations of the pupils.
- The Senior Leadership Team is currently being broadened and a good emphasis has been placed on the development of staff. The strategic roles of leaders at various levels are currently underdeveloped. Going forward, the school needs to develop further the roles of the leaders and review its processes for consultation with stakeholders, particularly parents and pupils, to inform more effectively its self-evaluation.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are very committed to the school and have a clear overview of its work and areas for development; they bring a suitable range of skills to their roles and manage carefully the budget allocations and viability of courses. The governors value highly the school's involvement in the Magherafelt Learning Partnership and the Shared Education programme and appreciate the benefits these bring to the pupils, staff and the wider community.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness and impact of the senior leadership of the school;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

8. Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe in school, and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

CONCLUSION

9. Overall effectiveness

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the children. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2014-15 to 2016-17

Based on data held by the school in SIMS² and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Magherafelt High School achieving five or more GCSE examinations (A* to C and A* to E) and equivalent subjects, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band³.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	58.5	62.1	73.5
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁴</i>	<i>75.7</i>	<i>72.3</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	31.9	27.6	48.2
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>51.7</i>	<i>43.5</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	93.6	95.4	91.6
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	22.7	13	34.6

GCE A level examination results at grades A* to C from 2014-15 to 2016-17

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Magherafelt High School achieving three or more GCE A levels, or equivalent, at grades A* to C, compared with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band; and two or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to E.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	88.6	85.2	74.3
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	65.9	55.6	54.3
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	97.7	96.3	91.4

² SIMS: School Information Management System

³ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁴ The benchmarking bands for 2015/16, as set in in Circular 2017/8 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting' are different to those used in preceding years; therefore, trend comparisons with previous years' benchmarking data need to be treated with caution.

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level or equivalent (over the past three years) Grades A* to C

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	101	90	90

GCSE Subject	Number of entries	School Three-year average at A* to C %	Northern Ireland Three year average at A* to C %
Art & Design	60	75.0	76
Business and Communication Studies	39	54.5	N/A
English ⁵	181	41.4	52
English Language ⁶	83	55.4	67
Geography	82	62.2	63
Health and Social Care	51	64.7	67
Home Economics (HE)	52	94.2	70
HE: Child Development	43	74.4	69
History	63	58.7	63
Information Technology	143	78.3	73
Mathematics	264	49.6	51
Motor Vehicle Studies	51	47.1	53
Performing Arts (Double award)*	28	92.9	N/A
Religious Studies	103	85.4	64
Science: Double Award	106	86.3	88
Science: Single Award	154	74.7	70
Sports/PE Studies	50	80	68
Agriculture	**	77.8	65
Business Studies	*	36.8	60
Construction and the Built Environment	*	95.7	N/A
French	*	100	77
Learning for Life and Work	*	11.1	75
Moving Image Arts	**	71.4	N/A
Music	*	100	82
Performing Arts	*	58.8	60
Technology and Design	*	67.9	67

*Indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

** indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years

⁵ In 2 out of the last 3 years

⁶ In 1 out of the last 3 years

OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4

Other courses taken in at least two of the last three years.

Level 2	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total entry over 3 years	School A* - C %
	% A* - C	% A* - C	% A* - C		
Business Studies (OS)	100	80	100	26	93.3
Construction Studies (OS)	100	100	88.9	24	96.3
Engineering (OS)	100	100	85.7	20	95.2
Horticulture (OS)	100	85.7	90	21	91.9
Practical Craft (OS)	88.9	100	90	30	93
Preparation for Work (NQF)	100	100	100	38	100

GCE EXAMINATION RESULTS

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level or equivalent (over the past three years) Grades A* to C

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	44	27	35

Full Subject	No. of entries over three years	School three-year average at A* to C %	Northern Ireland three-year average at A* to C %
Art & Design	*	75	91.8
Biology	*	72.7	83.5
Business Studies	46	76.6	88.5
Chemistry	**	100	86
D&T Product Design	*	60	67.7
Geography	22	80	86.4
Health & Social Care	**	100	85.3
History	22	58.3	85.9
Home Economics	**	100	92.5
Information Technology	53	96.2	79.4
Mathematics	**	100	89.3
Moving Image Arts	**	100	92.3
Performing Arts (Vocational)	**	100	91
Politics	*	100	88.5
Religious Studies	*	90	89.4
Science: Environmental (Environmental Technology)	**	100	N/A

*indicates fewer than 20 entries over 3 years

** indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years

OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: POST-16

Other [level 3] courses taken in at least two of the last three years

Level 3	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total entry over 3 years	School A* - C %
	% A* - C	% A* - C	% A* - C		
Engineering (NQF)	100	N/A	N/A	4	100
Health Studies (BTEC)	N/A	100	88.9	12	94.5
Health Studies (NQF)	78.6	100	N/A	15	89.3
Performing Arts (Vocational) (NQF)	100	N/A	N/A	3	100
Self-Development	N/A	100	100	12	100
Sports Studies	100	100	100	19	100

STAYING ON RATE⁷ 2016/17

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at school compared with the NI average for all schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Year 12 staying on to Year 13	48.4	37.9
% Year 13 staying on to Year 14	75.2	82.1

LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS 2015/16

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from Magherafelt High School who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

	NI	School (total)	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	12996	90			
Employment	1511 (11.6%)	7 (7.8%)			
Institute of Further Education	5745 (44.2%)	50 (55.6%)	0	50	
Institute of Higher Education	3051 (23.5%)	20 (22.2%)	0	0	20
Work-based Learning (Training)	1976 (15.2%)	9 (10%)			
Unemployed	467 (3.6%)	4 (4.4%)			
Unknown	246 (1.9%)	0			

⁷ The 'Staying On Rate' is taken to mean the pupils who stay on at the school from year 12 to year 13 or transfer from year 12 to year 13 in another school; and, then from year 13 to year 14.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication, which is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary>.

The arrangements for this inspection included: meetings with the principal, representatives from the governors and formal discussions with some pupils (in groups); and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire. In addition, the inspection team reviewed documentation provided by the school and pupil performance data.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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